The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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First and Last.

Soft breathings of the vesper hour,
When at the closing of the flower,
All nature seems to think and feel,
And to her awful Maker kneel;

Pure longings that without a word
Awoke with the awakening bird,
When Earth, arrayed in Easter light,
Arises from the tomb of night;

Sweet thoughts of kindly slow decay,—
Leaves dropping one by one away,—
When in the year's old age we find
No trace of time upon the mind;

Deep yearnings of the virgin spring,
When birds and hearts begin to sing,
And April's tears of gladness burst
O'er buds, her freshest and her first;

First smiles and looks, first born, first love;
First musings of the spring's first dove;
First breathings of the soul's new birth;
First glimpses of new heaven and earth;

Last looks on earth; last thoughts, last cares,
Last words, last faintly-uttered prayers;
Last smiles of evening: smiles we read
On features of our sainted dead;—

These hint with dark foreshadowings
That Joy and Woe alike have wings,
And for the Faith, that is not sight,
But leaps into the Infinite.

ROBERT WILSON.

The Old and the New.

BY EDITH GITTINS.

(A Paper read at the Guilds' Union Conference, April 1, 1902).

A special measure of responsibility lies with those who stand between the old ways and the new. So much that is precious is in danger of being lost and forgotten. I fear that we who to-day occupy this position accept with too little regard and anxiety the disuse and abandonment of pious practices which helped the inward life of our forerunners—

"Ears of wheat,
Sown once for food, but trodden into clay."

No longer, when in perplexity, do we open our Bibles at random and think that in the first sentence that meets our eyes we have the heaven-message fitted to our need. We dislike, and scoff at, the use of "D.V." in announcements of projected events. We have largely abandoned the saying of "Grace," daily Bible reading, family prayers, and home hymn-singing. There is a marked tendency to make little difference between Sunday and other days: the children have the same toys, their elders, with exceptions, the same music, books, talk, and occupations. We go once to chapel instead of twice: the Communion Service is less awful and important: we no longer keep diaries in which to bewail our sins—such

sins as a critical temper during a sermon, crossness over stocking-darning, or the idle waste of an hour's time. We are too apt to impute insincerity to, and to express ridicule or suspicion of motive for, individuals and for nations who still have the old language of religion on their lips. Yet we are the children of these Puritan ancestors, and we know not how much of the good that is in us is due to our fortunate inheritance. We know well that it was true religion, and not cant with them; we know that through these channels flowed the living waters from the springs of God. Love, honour, and reverence to noble and steadfast lives given to an older England, to those devout and quiet spirits who, anchored and tethered to a small round of duties and of interests in country towns and lonely farm houses, were yet in direct touch and communion with Heaven. God make us as faithful to our light as they were to theirs!

How the light has broadened! We live in a new earth, under new heavens. From the ideas concerning God, the visible creation, and the origin and powers and destiny of man, error after error has fallen. Everything is more wonderful than was supposed. It seems truer to say that miracles are always happening than to say that "miracles do not happen." The dividing line between the sacred and the secular is done away; all is seen to be sacred—the earth is the Lord's *and the fulness thereof*. Monday is "the Lord's Day" as truly as is Sunday. Divine service is performed wherever a faithful soul does a needed work; the factory, the shop, the study, the school, the home, may be House of God and Gate of Heaven. The "Word of God" is not between Bible covers only. Nature has become to us "the garment of God, the vesture we see Him by." The conception of the Eternal as "outside the world, watching it and seeing it go" is fast fading, and we know Him as "the inmost uplifting life of all things"—of growing lilies and of soaring larks, of discoverers in all realms, of prophets, and of saints. We need, therefore, no Mediator to find Him or to be found of Him. The Message of Jesus is being understood as it could never have been before—the Prayer he taught us receives continually fuller meaning.

Dear friends, this is Truth to us, this is Religion, this is the Gospel. How eager and careful should we be to teach it to our children, to all the children we can reach, to the young comrades who are face to face with the temptations of the world, to all who wander in darkness! What joy and peace should be ours! The radiance of our faith should be seen in our faces; out of the fulness of our heart our mouth should speak. When we hear good news we tell it, we long to make others glad. It is natural to us. At such a moment silence is inhuman. Nothing is more characteristic of our beloved prophet, Dr. Martineau, and nothing shows more clearly the grounds of our gratitude to him than these words of his: "On looking back over the remembered work of four-score years, I find it all summed up in the simplest of arts—the unreserved expression of whatever took hold of me as most true and good." It is a clear echo of the Master—"All things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you." How far off from most of us is this simplicity, this "unreserved expression," this generous unstinted sharing of spiritual food? "We are miserly with immortal things. Why are we so fearful lest we exhaust the heaven within us? We dare not act upon the whisper of the God who inspires us. . . . Whence comes the timidity of the divine in man? It might truly be said that the nearer a movement of our soul approaches the divine so much the more scrupulously do we conceal it from the eyes of our brethren." (Maeterlinck).

Ours is not the silence of indifference or of unbelief. It arises in part from mere *mauvaise honte*, clumsy shyness: in part from nobleness and depth of feeling; it is in part a protest against insincere glibness; it is also due to *shame*, consciousness of our unworthiness, our unfaithfulness. We know the mind of the Lord better than ever people did, but it is as hard as ever to do His Will. The more perfect the knowledge the greater the responsibility. Much is required from those who have received much. We lay our hand on our mouth and feel that we can count on the growth of one sole virtue only, *humbleness*.

But shame for personal shortcomings is no justification of this dumbness and paralysis of expression. If we withhold the Testimony which is ours to give, we add sin to sin, and deserve more stripes. The artist who would fain record the exquisite beauty of a wide sunlit landscape feels himself baffled and defeated. His white paper or white paint is his strongest

possible light, yet these, even when sun-illumined, are to the blaze of the sun's disc as 100,000 to 1. Yet he does well not to give up his work in despair because of the poverty and inadequacy of "earth's materials." The adage, "Practice is better than precept," is one of the half-truths. We cannot do without precept, and that is poor precept that is not better than practice! The vice of hypocrisy only begins to rear its hateful head when men drag down the Ideal to their own low Actual. If we do not remind ourselves and one another of the Ideal Good, the light of it is apt to fade—we lose the Vision. If we do not share the Treasure we grow ever poorer. The preachers—the teachers—by their very teaching are bound to goodness; any gross lapse is in them more awful and black. And, similarly, those who hear them, who receive their instruction, who join in any kind of religious union, are by their attitude as learners helped to cleave to that which is good. Profession is a help to performance. We need every help. With humility and joy, therefore, let us testify by words and works our desire to be on the Lord's side, and let us draw others to join our company, feeling that by so doing we render them the best service in our power.

Let us carefully separate, and retain and use, the things that remain true for us from those that are outgrown by reason of our larger knowledge, and welcome every new means by which the spiritual life may be strengthened, and expression found for our beautiful and exalted thought of religion. "Religion is something simple and sublime, it means one thing and one thing only—eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God."

This is the breath of life of our Churches, this is the reason of our gathering the children into Sunday Schools; and our Guilds have the same origin and meaning. They aim at helping our young people to amplify and unify and sanctify all the aspects of life—its relationships, its purposes and hopes, its duties, its pleasures, and its joys. They stand for the glad confession of God as "the Soul of Beauty and Enduring Good," "of Whom and through Whom and to Whom are all things."—AMEN.

Lord Chesterfield used to say: "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well."

Whosoever will be Saved.

Whether the propositions contained in the Athanasian Creed are true or not, no one can deny the impressiveness of the opening clause. It is not only a solemn affirmation, but it is an appeal to a universal instinct, that of self-preservation, for who is there who does not wish to be saved, if not to be saved means to perish everlastingly? We naturally seek for directions which will show us the way of safety. But the affirmation that "before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith," does not seem to meet the case, however that faith may be defined. The condition imposed is that whosoever will be saved must faithfully believe a creed. But is this condition the right one? The Church says it is. Does the Bible say so? Does the spirit in a man say so? Does reason say so? I think not. A man's convictions may, perhaps must, have some influence over his life and conduct, and thus affect his salvation; but belief in a creed may have no influence over him whatever. We see this every day. This is admitted by John Wesley in a striking passage in one of his sermons. He says: "For neither does religion consist in orthodoxy or right opinions; which, although they are not properly outward things, are not in the heart, but the understanding. A man may be orthodox on every point; he may not only espouse right opinions, but zealously defend them against all opposers; he may think justly concerning the incarnation of our Lord, concerning the ever-blessed Trinity, and every other doctrine contained in the Oracles of God; he may assent to all the three creeds—that called the Apostles, the Nicene, and the Athanasian, and yet it is possible that he may have no religion at all, no more than a Jew, Turk, or Pagan. He may be almost as orthodox as the devil (though, indeed, not altogether; for every man errs in something; whereas we cannot well conceive him to hold any erroneous opinions), and may, all the while, be a great stranger to the religion of the heart."

John Wesley was not a bigot, but he comes perilously near Athanasianism in denying religion to Jew, Turk, or Pagan; and at other times he appears to lay great stress upon correct opinion in doubting the salvation of really good men who have not the Evangelical faith. It must surely be admitted that multitudes

of people are saved who no more hold the peculiar doctrines of John Wesley than they do those of the Catholic Church. But the temptation even to good men, like Wesley, is to think that their way of salvation is the only one. Bigotry is not confined to one church; there is scarcely a denomination in Christendom that is free from it. "There is only one way of salvation," they are tempted to say, "and that is ours." We often hear of the intolerance of the Catholic Church, but sects the furthest removed from it often exhibit the same spirit. There is a sad example of this in the recently-published *History of the Plymouth Brethren* by Mr. W. Blair Neatby. It is a painful story of division, recrimination, and excommunication. The Brethren became divided into two parties, the "Open" and the "Exclusive," the members of one refusing to recognise those of the other. To what extremes this led, Mr. Neatby shows by one anecdote. A man and his wife lived on a farm in the Far West, miles away from any other Brethren. When the split occurred the wife followed Darby, the leader of the Exclusives; the husband denied his authority, and from that moment they could no longer "break bread" together. The Brethren, of course, are an extreme case. But even liberal Christians, with far less justification, as they reject authority and allow the right of private judgment, sometimes, probably unconsciously, exhibit something of the same spirit. Someone starts a new orthodoxy or a new heterodoxy, it does not much matter which, and he is quite within his rights in doing so, but not content with this he not unfrequently speaks in contemptuous terms of those who refuse to accept it, calls them the "old school" or something of the kind, and assures them most solemnly that their future depends upon their accepting his opinions. We can sometimes almost fancy we hear the *Quicumque vult salvus esse* coming from a Unitarian pulpit. And this after Martineau has so clearly shown that to hold any particular opinions about the person of Jesus is not the same thing as to have the religion of Jesus.

The mistake about the conditions of salvation, which is the root of bigotry, rests upon a mistake about the nature of salvation. If we hold that the good man, the just man, the temperate, the merciful, the loving man is already saved, there is an end to intolerance—except intolerance of evil. The error is in putting creed before life, and not distinguishing between religion and belief. This is encouraged even by our translation of the New Testament, where we read that God is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. "There you have it," says the holder of creeds, "those that believe." And yet that is not what St. Paul said. In this case the English translators would have done better to have followed the Vulgate, where πιστῶν is rendered "fidelium." Those who are faithful, true, obedient. So we may conclude that whosoever will be saved, before all things, it is necessary that he be just, sober, pure, and loving. For how else can we be faithful, obedient to God, or even to Christ. On one occasion Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?" But he did not say that their salvation depended upon their answer.

WALTER LLOYD.

National Conference Guilds' Union.

The first annual meeting of this Union was held on Easter Tuesday, April 1st, at the Old Meeting Church, Birmingham. In the afternoon a business meeting was held under the presidentship of the Rev. Joseph Wood, and a conference followed. There was a large attendance, including the following:—Revs. C. Hargrove, J. Ellis, J. Birks, H. Gow, I. Wrigley, E. D. P. Evans, A. A. Charlesworth, E. A. Voysey, A. Ryland, C. D. Badland, and Wilfrid Harris, Messrs. C. Harding, J. H. Forrester, E. L. Tyndall, C. Wood, E. M. Laye, A. Wigley, Miss Edith Gittins, and Miss C. Badland.

The Rev. J. Ellis (secretary) read the report as follows:—

The first annual report of the National Conference Guilds' Union must of necessity be a record of beginnings; but beginnings, as the Council believe, fraught with great possibilities. It owes its origin to a paper read at the Leicester Conference, 1900, by the Rev. John Ellis, and a brief discussion thereupon. The writer, pleading for a more consecrated interest in the religious life of the young on the part of those who professed to have their welfare at heart, advocated the organisation, in our churches, of societies which should bring the young people into real religious fellowship and provide an opportunity for self-expression and mutual encouragement in the best things. He indicated that there were already in the churches forming the Conference several societies with just such aims, that had been doing excellent work for and through the young during many

years. He therefore advocated that the first step should be to bring these scattered societies into union for the more effective spread of the Guild idea. The whole matter was referred to the Conference Committee for consideration. At their first meeting subsequent to the Leicester Conference they appointed a sub-committee, consisting of those who had shown special interest in young people, and who had experience of Guilds and Young People's Religious Societies, with power to act.

This sub-committee at once set to work to draft a constitution for a proposed Union of Guilds and Young People's Societies. Their aim was, on a distinctly religious basis, to include in happy fellowship the various types of societies which had grown up naturally out of local needs. The draft constitution, circulars, and leaflets were issued to the churches; with the result that a decided impetus was given to the Guild movement in the churches which form the Conference.

The inaugural meeting of the Guilds' Union was held at Little Portland Street Chapel, London, on Thursday, May 30th, last year. Considering the great pressure of meetings at that time, the gathering was influential and representative. The draft constitution was adopted with but slight modification. Officers and council were elected. Encouraging addresses were given by the Revs. Dr. Crothers, C. W. Wendte, J. Wood, C. Hargrove, H. Gow, J. J. Wright, and others; and the Union started its career with confidence and hopefulness.

The Council are gratified with results thus far achieved. A reference to the "Year Book" will show that already 23 Guilds have joined the Union, with a total membership of 1297. Since the "Year Book" was issued two of the non-affiliated Guilds have come in—namely, Bradford and Lye, bringing the membership up to 1439.

There are in addition 14 Guilds which have sent reports, with a membership of 504. We have also heard of Guilds having been recently started at Stockton, Pendleton, and Holbeck. These results, attained in less than twelve months, or within two years if we go back to the Leicester Conference, are distinctly encouraging.

The "Manual of Services and Prayers for Guild Missions," issued by the Council last autumn, is now used in several places, and the responsive utterances, as well as the simple fervent prayers, are found to be greatly helpful to the religious life.

The "Year Book," published early in January, 1902, is having a good sale. It should be useful in giving information to those who want to know about the Guild movement, and its suggestiveness as to topics and methods of Guild members.

The daily devotional readings at the end are calculated to send those who use them into the work and experience of the day with brighter thought and nobler aim.

The problem which the Union has now to face is, how to make the Union really effective. Guilds men and women in our churches will be strengthened in their goodwill and purpose when they realise that they are really parts of a greater body. Therefore some method must be devised by which the various Guilds may know of each other's doings. The weekly or monthly periodicals should be used for the propagation of Guild intelligence. Then as autumn approaches there should be an earnest combined effort to bring home to all concerned the vital importance to our churches of the Guild idea. May we not hope the time is nigh at hand when the consecrated young life in our churches will assert its power, and become an influence in the community making for religious, intellectual, and social advance?

The Treasurer's report not being ready, the Secretary notified that the liabilities amounted to about £39 and receipts to about £20, leaving a deficit of about £19. Much of the expense this year had been initial outlay, and need not occur again.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report, congratulated the Union on its satisfactory beginning, and emphasised both the need and possibilities of such work as it could do among our churches.

The Rev. C. Hargrove, in seconding the motion, referred specially to the work of the Secretary, who had suggested the Union, and by energetic work had done a great part in promoting its success thus far. He wished Mr. Ellis, in taking up arduous duties in London, to feel encouraged by their appreciation of his labours for the Union, and of his efficient ministry in the North. He also expressed much satisfaction with the work already accomplished by the Guilds' Union, and indicated lines on which its influence might extend.—The resolution was carried unanimously.

The officers and members of Council were then elected for the ensuing year, the following names being proposed by the Rev. J. Wood, and seconded by Mr. J. H. Forrester: — President, Rev. Joseph Wood; vice-president, Rev. C. Hargrove, M.A.; secretary, Rev. John Ellis; treasurer, H. P. Greg, Esq.; Council, Revs. W. H. Drummond, B.A., E. D. P. Evans, J. J. Wright, F. Freeston, Miss Edith Gittins, Miss Florence Hill, Miss Tremain, Mr. C. Wood, leaving four others to be co-opted.

At a subsequent meeting the President delivered an address on "The Guild Idea," tracing its origin through the Frith Guilds and Peace Guilds of the seventh century, the religious guilds of a later time, and the modern guild movement in the churches. The ancient Guilds contained much that was noble and beautiful, and existed largely for the protection of the rights and liberties of the people. The essential thing in all Guilds, ancient or modern, is that they are associations for mutual help, mutual enjoyment, and mutual encouragement in good endeavour. Amongst many valuable suggestions, Mr. Wood advocated—(1) The formation of District Unions of Guilds; (2) the undertaking of some united

effort, such as a Country Holiday Home, to which all Guilds might recommend those needing rest and health; (3) the promotion of religious culture by means of essays on subjects selected by the Council. These would be in accord with the great aims of the Guild, which are to quicken a sense of responsibility for personal character and to quicken a sense of responsibility for the public good.

Miss Edith Gittins (Leicester) read a paper, which will be found in full in another place.

Mr. A. Terry (Leeds) spoke on Guilds from a layman's standpoint. He likened the Guild in the moral and religious sphere to the technical school in the intellectual. They should aim to attract the young people at the critical age when it became a question whether they would remain with us or be swept off into the current of the world and drift away until they were lost to us for ever. They wanted to show the young that what they had been taught was no abstract theory based upon hypothesis of doubtful origin, but something which was really practical, and from which practical results might be obtained, whether the experiment made were of the small ones of the laboratory or technical school, or of world-wide dimensions; to show them and place in their hands the power of proving for themselves, with the least possible supervision, the fact that good works might be done in a small way as well as in a large one, and that the power of doing them was not restricted to the elders. The Guild fostered in the young a love of being of service to their fellow-men.

Miss C. Badland (Kidderminster) took as her subject "Brotherhood; or, Following Jesus."

Mr. E. Oldfield (Sheffield) spoke on "Guilds and Religious Expression."

Tea was provided by the members of the Old Meeting Guild for about 200 friends and visitors, after which an organ recital was given in the church by Mr. A. J. Cotton (organist), followed by a religious service conducted by the Revs. E. D. P. Evans and A. A. Charlesworth; addresses being delivered by the Rev. C. Hargrove, M.A., and the Rev. H. Gow, B.A.

Bible Class Lessons.

II.

THE TEMPTATION STORY.

The Temptation story, so far as it is true, must have been related by Jesus to his disciples. From the nature of the case, no one else could have been present or known anything about it. It must have been a wild, strange experience, to which Jesus may have often referred, and on which the imagination of his disciples loved to dwell.

Before considering the meaning of the truth of the Temptation, let us look at the different ways in which the Gospels treat it. The fourth Gospel omits it altogether. Probably the writer felt a dislike to the idea that Jesus was tempted; it seemed to him derogatory to Jesus; it did not harmonize with his thought of the "light of the world," and it is therefore excluded from his story. Mark's gospel gives a very short account, omitting all reference to the threefold form of the temptation: "And forthwith the spirit casts him out into the wilderness; and he was in the wilderness being tempted forty days by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered unto him." Nothing is said of his having fasted during the whole period. The reference to angels ministering to him reminds us of the ravens ministering to Elijah when he went "in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God."

The only detailed accounts of the temptation are to be found in Matthew and Luke: there are slight differences between them which are worth noticing because they throw light on the different character of the two Gospels. Luke says the devil "taking him up (*i.e.*, into the air) showed him all the kingdoms of the inhabited world in a moment of time, and said, 'To thee will I give all this power and their glory.'" Matthew says, "The devil conducts him on to a very lofty mountain, and shows him all the kingdoms of the cosmos and their glory."

These differences appear very slight, but they are significant of the differences between the two Gospels, and they are an easy opportunity for practising the Biblical criticism which sometimes seems so learned and difficult, but which is really very simple and interesting. Luke's imagination is much more literary and artistic than that of Matthew. He describes Jesus as taken up not merely on to a mountain, but into the air; and he describes him as being shown not all the world as Matthew says, but the *inhabited* world; and he describes him as not seeing their glory as Matthew does, but as being promised their glory. Luke knows that you cannot see very far even from a high mountain, and he has not the love of mountains and the sense of their sacred associations which Matthew and the Jews generally possessed. Two of the most inspiring and wonderful things in nature are the sea and

the mountain. The Jews were curiously deficient in love and reverence for the sea. "There is sorrow on the sea," says Jeremiah, "it cannot be quiet;" and most characteristic of the Jews is the picture of the new heaven and earth in Revelation, where "there shall be no more sea." But if they failed to appreciate the beauty and the mystery of the sea, they made up for it by their love of mountains. Sinai and Horeb, Carmel and Lebanon and Tabor, and the mountains round about Jerusalem, are full of associations with divine help and guidance. Mountains in Matthew's Gospel play a more important part than in Luke's Gospel, because Matthew's Gospel is written by a man who is more entirely Jewish in sympathy. There is no "sermon on the mount" in Luke. It is a "sermon on the plain." It is less exalted both in its surroundings and in its teachings. Look at Luke vi., 17, where as a prologue to the sermon we read, "And having descended he stood with them upon a level plain."

Another example of the more purely Jewish character of Matthew is seen in the second temptation, where Matthew speaks of the devil taking Jesus into the *Holy City*, while Luke speaks of the devil leading him into Jerusalem.

But now, leaving these comparisons between the two Gospels, let us ask ourselves what is the real truth and meaning of the story. The details in Matthew and Luke cannot be regarded as history, but behind them no doubt lies some great experience of which Jesus spoke to his disciples in picturesque metaphors. For nearly 30 years he had lived an obscure, quiet life in Nazareth. No one can describe or enter in to the unwritten history of those 30 years. They were no doubt the real preparation for his future power and influence. Then in the fulness of his manhood he went, as so many others went, "to be baptized of John in the Jordan." That was an epoch-making event in his life. It stirred him with a sense of unknown duties awaiting him, and untried powers with which to do those duties. It gave him the call to action; but to what kind of action? The baptism gave no answer to that question. He felt called to do something, but he did not yet know what. In the story of the temptations we have the attempt to describe in Eastern metaphors the experiences of Jesus when awakened to his powers and when asking himself what he should do with his life.

There were three plain courses of action open to Jesus. He might go back home again and live quietly in his native town, using his powers, like the great majority of men, in earning his daily bread. It is possible that such a course of action is pointed at by the temptation to "turn stones into bread." Or he might throw himself into the political and social movements of his time. The Jews were seeking for a leader; they were ripe for revolution. They longed to cast off the Roman yoke, to revenge the insults on their religion, and to establish it in its purity again. There was a great opportunity of power for a leader with eloquence and wisdom, who should know how to inspire and unite his people. It is possible that such a course of action is pointed at by the temptation in which Jesus was shown all the kingdoms of the world and was promised their power and glory.

Or, lastly, he might withdraw himself into monastic seclusion, joining one of the many ascetic bodies of the Essenes, who lived apart from business and from politics. He might cultivate his own soul, and leave God to guide the world and take care of all events. It is possible that this course of action is pointed at by the temptation to throw himself from a pinnacle of the temple, and trust to the angels to prevent any harm from happening. It points to the danger of the mystic contemplative character. Nothing can happen without God. I need not strive or suffer. God does not need us in order to save the world. He and his angels will take care of all.

A life of inconspicuous and happy toil, a life of political service, or a life of contemplation and prayer—these, I think, were possibilities which we may say with some confidence must have occurred to Jesus when he considered what he should do with his powers. None of them was wrong in itself. The temptations of the greatest and best men are not temptations to do actual wrong: they are temptations to fall into line, to do what is expected of them, to fear the unknown, to fail in trusting God. There are few things harder than to disappoint the expectations of those who love us and those whom we love. The relations and early comrades of Jesus would expect him to go home again; his countrymen who saw

something of his power would expect him to help them in political and social reform; his religious friends, disciples of John the Baptist, might expect him to enter on a religious life apart. He dared to disappoint all these expectations, and to go out on an untried way, guided by the spirit of God. He felt the call to preach the Gospel to the poor. His relations thought him mad, John and his disciples looked askance at a teaching and a method they did not understand, and the Jewish people listened for a time with bewilderment, and then crucified him as a subverter of the peace.

He adopted a course which demanded the most absolute courage and faith. He must have counted the cost and prepared himself for the result in that lonely conflict in the wilderness. He deliberately rejected the easy path, and accepted for himself poverty and misunderstanding and shame and death.

Whatever else the temptation may mean, it means this: that he put away all thought of pleasing himself, all thought of ambition, all fear of men, and gave himself wholly into the hands of God for the service of man.

H. Gow.

Happy.

His youthful years had withered in the slum
Where he and his were bred.
He was a burden, and, though lips were dumb,
Hearts wished that he were dead.

And so wished he; for in his wearied soul
There was but one desire—
To slip away, to reach a strange, vague goal
Where time would cease to tire.

But on a day some one with grave, sweet face,
And tender, skilful hands,
Came to his side, and bore him from the place,
It seemed, to far-off lands.

Yet, after all, 'twas but a whirling hour
Out of the smoke-blind town
To where the sky shone with unblemished power
Over a fair, broad down.

And he, the cripple, whose sad Springs were more
Than one who watched him knew,
Had never seen so much green grass before,
Nor skies so big and blue.

He was so softly glad, so full of peace,
He laid him back and sighed,
And watched the deep sky and its floating fleece—
Dreaming that he had died.

J. J. Bell.

Dinah Maria Mulock (Craik).

"SHE WROTE *JOHN HALIFAX GENTLEMAN.*"

How many persons now read "John Halifax." It appeared the year after Mrs. Gaskell's "North and South," and the year before George Eliot's "Scenes of Clerical Life," and it was more popular than either. It was so high in favour with our fathers and mothers that it was placed above and apart from all other novels, and considered the only one worthy to be read on Sunday. We recall the familiar frontispiece by Millais, wherein little Ursula March stands at the door of her father's house, and offers a large slice of bread to the friendless boy in the rain outside. It is said that the authoress witnessed at Tewkesbury the incident which suggested the story of the kindly girl and the hungry boy, and it is known that in the yard of Tewkesbury Abbey the name of John Halifax was formerly to be found. This quaint old Gloucestershire town provides the local scene and colouring of the story under the guise of Norton Bury and Abbey. It was, therefore, very fitting that the writer of "John Halifax Gentleman" should be commemorated by a marble medallion placed in this noble building, and in its centre is the winning portrait which is reproduced in the engraving.

Dinah Maria Mulock was burn at unpoetic Stoke-upon-Trent on April 20th, 1826. Shewing for literature an early inclination she, at 20, came up to London with the intention of making writing her profession, and quickly made friends who encouraged her ambition, among them being Alexander Macmillan, Charles Mudie, and Westland Marston. Within the next forty years she produced no less than fifty-two separate works, ranging from children's stories to "Sermons Out of Church." Encouraged by early success, she doubtless wrote too much, for her latest works are not the best. But "The Ogilvies," "Olive," "The Head of the Family," "Agatha's Husband," "A Life for a Life," were all delightful, if not original, set to high motive, if not imaginative, too earnest to be commonplace, too religiously and morally healthy to be either namby-pamby or goody-goody.

And if on the one hand we value most those distinct works of genius which deal searchingly

and cleverly with the heights and depths of experience, it is none the less a helpful office to light up with interest and robe with romance the domestic intercourse of more ordinary existence. This is the virtue and the praise of "John Halifax." It is a noble presentation of a true English gentleman taken, not from the gilded abodes of birth and wealth, but, from middle-class life. In its pages the home dwelling graces shine aloft like stars—kindness, self-sacrifice, love, marriage, parentage, happiness, endurance, faith, the facing of death—and all in a fresh and wholesome atmosphere so different from the vitiated air of the modern novel writer and reader. Hence it has been a good influence in many lives, quickening aspirations, and strengthening ideals. Life has become less simple since it was written, and so we now pronounce it mild and tame; perhaps we should not lose, but gain, if we could return to the tone of "John Halifax Gentleman."

After living many years at North End, Hampstead, where she not only worked hard but made friend after friend, Miss Mulock married in 1864, George Lillie Craik, and went to live at Shortlands, in Kent. Here she died suddenly in 1887, and was buried in the churchyard at Keston.

She lived a blameless life, and left a gracious memory. There is something greater than intellectual originality. As a woman, and as a writer, in her personal character, as in her contributions to literature, she thought and wrote as a dedicated spirit, freely giving her best to the common lot.

FRANK K. FREESTON.

Notes and Jottings.

All subjects of interest are dwarfed this month into insignificance by the appearance of the Government Education Bill. It is a measure which, if carried without drastic modifications, is calculated to have a retarding influence not only upon the education, but also upon the religious progress of the country. Its policy is clearly to perpetuate denominationalism in national education, and its effect may be to force the smaller denominations to provide schools of their own as a matter of self-protection. The chorus of clerical approval with which it has been receiued is distinctly ominous. Apparently many districts will now be permanently debarred from the possession of finely-equipped public schools of the type with which we have become familiar under the great School Boards. The local authority will not be compelled by law to build them, and the argument that it is cheaper to allow the Church to provide the necessary accommodation will be almost irresistible. That this accommodation will not be of the kind to which Boards like those of Birmingham or Manchester or Leeds have accustomed us almost goes without saying.

We are glad to see that some of the foremost authorities upon elementary education, like Sir Joshua Fitch and Mr. Brodie, have spoken out against the reactionary character of the bill. Sir Joshua Fitch points out that its chief aim is not educational at all. It does nothing, he says, "*to secure or even to suggest improvement in education, or to secure for children better teaching or better opportunities of intellectul advance.*" What severer condemnation could be passed upon a measure which purports to be one of educational reform? It is at the same time the true line of attack. We desire not to protect the so-called "interests" of the Churchman or the Nonconformist, but to eliminate all religious rivalries because they degrade the educational ideal.

It is at first sight a little perplexing to find the National Union of Teachers uniting to bless the Bill. The motive is probably to be found in the fact that a large number of them have had terrible experience of the inefficiency of denominational schools; and anything which promises to move that inefficiency by giving financial aid must from their point of view be a step in the right direction. There are, however, other considerations which might well make the teachers pause. Not only is there no provision for the training of teachers, one of the most crying needs of our present educational system, but the whole tendency of the Bill will be to rivet denominational fetters and religious tests more firmly upon the teaching profession. It is the one branch of the Civil Service where we make the acceptance of a creed the condition of preferment. We should like to see a strong protest raised by the teachers themselves against this infringement of the liberties of their profession.

The report of the Fulham Conference upon Confession in the Church of England is curious reading. The question itself and the mediævalism of many of the arguments have an air of unreality about them in face of the intellectual and religious problems of modern life. Of course the Conference, like a Royal Commission, is a convenient way of postponing action and allowing things to take their own course. Compulsory Confession before Communion is evidently a growing practice in the Church of England in spite of the rubrics. We believe that this clerical direction of souls has something very uncongenial about it to the English character; but if it is practised at all it should be only as part of the accepted discipline of the church, for which the confessor has undergone a long and rigorous training. At present the Anglican attitude is one of easy tolerance of the amateur, who does what he likes in these matters. We might pardon the characteristic inconsistency if it were not for the grave moral dangers.

The American Unitarian Association has published an interesting report upon the condition of the rural churches, especially in New England. In the States the same drift is taking place into the large towns as with us, leaving the village and the small country-town face to face with the difficulties of poverty and a dwindling population. It is hard in these circumstances to maintain a healthy religious life and an efficient

ministry in the country churches. We are confronted by precisely the same problems, though perhaps we have hardly realised how pressing they are, if many of our country congregations, which still struggle bravely to hold aloft the torch of liberty, are to be saved from extinction. Perhaps this is one of the useful pieces of work to which the next meeting of the National Conference might set its hand. We want first of all to get at the facts, and then on the basis of the facts to consider the recommendations of a representative committee. It is emphatically a case in which the strong must help the weak.

We have noticed lately some encouraging signs of the revival of a Broad Church School to continue the almost extinct traditions of Arnold, Stanley, and Jowett. Under the title "*Contentio Veritatis*" six Oxford tutors have just issued a volume of essays in the interests of a Liberal Theology. It opens with a strong essay from the pen of Dr. Rashdull on "The Ultimate Basis of Theism." This is followed by a discussion of "The Person of Christ," by the Rev. W. R. Inge, who also contributes a very suggestive paper on the Sacraments. The other essays are not strikingly original, but they are scholarly and outspoken. Two of them deal with "The Teaching of Christ" and "Modern Criticism and the New Testament" respectively, and there is no attempt to shirk the real problems of criticism. The book is one which those who are interested in contemporary movements of religious thought should read. It is published by Mr. John Murray for 12s. net.

Legends of the English Lakes.

In addition to the beauties of the scenery, the Lake District possesses an especial interest in the numerous tales and legends associated with almost every height and *how*, every lake and *ghyll*. The very names given to them recall to our minds the times of our Scandinavian forefathers. For instance, Silver How at Grasmere is the Hill of Sölvar, and Butterliphow is the Mound of Buthar, surnamed Lepr the Nimble. Windermere, Buttermere, and Elterwater are the meres and water called after the ancient Norsemen Windar, Buthar or Butar, and Eldir.

The belief that these hardy sea-kings selected the mountain-tops for their burial places suggests the theme of many a poetic legend; and the fancy still exists that they revisit the place of their sepulture, and make their presence known by musical tones, as of unearthly harps touched by no mortal hands. One of these legends, called "Sölvar How," tells how the beautiful "Dagmar the Dane" on her white steed was allured:

With the firstlings and yearlings, from hill-top and hollow,
Gathering far, the sweet voice of the Phantom to follow—
To them sweeter than murmur of fountain and rill.

The Princess was favoured with a vision of the Phantom "in all his bright beauty;" and when he left the hill-top which overlooks the placid lake of Grasmere, she followed him—

To hear his wild songs all alone;
And to chase from his lips every accent of sorrow,
As they walked through the dawn of a brighter to-morrow
Into sunlight that heaven upon earth never beamed.

Deaf to her hapless father's entreaties that she would return to his tower at Skelwith, she fled over hollow and hill till they reached the deep chasm of Dungeon Ghyll. Softly the shade glided over; and though some huge rocks falling with a crash bridged over the gulf, the maiden in vain stretched out an imploring hand. The shade was gone. And

In her bower and in hall there was wailing and sorrow,
And the hills shone renewed with each glorious to-morrow,
But their bright star, their Dagmar, they knew not again.

Equally pathetic is the story of Ermengarde, connected with St. Herbert's Isle, on Derwentwater. She had made some tapestry for the altar of St. Herbert's Chapel, and rose on Mayday with her love divided between God and the saint. An Elfman who was passing Ermengarde's window told her she might have her Mayday wish fulfilled if she would ask the two fishes of Bowscale Tarn for "two tiny scales, of gold and pearly whiteness," and place them on her heart. But, alas! when she placed them in her bosom, the link which secured round her neck the "simple cross" her mother had given her, was broken. Her thoughts too fondly set on the "bright angelic air" of the

saint, she wandered down Greta's side, and staying for a moment's glance at herself, "before she looked on him"—

Its broken link dissevering,
Her little cross fell sinking slow
Beyond her vain endeavouring.

And then having her in their power,

From the stream two fin-like arms
Leapt up and snatched her wailing,
And dragged her down with all her charms
In anguish unavailing.

The story runs that the misguided maiden is not wholly lost, but waits till

Some bard shall wander by
With harp and song so holy,
That they shall wrench the caves where lie
Her limbs in anguish lowly.

Bowscale Tarn is a little north-east of Blencathra, now called Saddleback. It has long been a tradition in that country-side that it contains two immortal fish. Lord Clifford, "the Shepherd Lord," is said to have held intercourse with them, and had authority over them. Readers of the classics will recollect that Martial mentions some fishes in a lake at Baiæ, in Campania, which were consecrated to Domitian, and knew their master.

Bede, in his *History of the Church of England*, gives a beautiful description of the friendship between St. Herbert and St. Cuthbert of Farn Isle. When St. Cuthbert was near his end, his "brother Herberte" implored him to pray that they might "depart hence into heaven together." And the prayer was granted. In death they "were not divided"—"on the same day their souls departed from their bodies, and were straight in union in beatific sight and vision." This was in 687 A.D.; and as late as 1374 we find that the hermit's little oratory or chapel was resorted to in memory of his death, with services and processions. Forty days' indulgence was granted to all those who were present at the mass celebrated by the Vicar of Crosthwaite on the anniversary day.

The story of "The Cuckoo in Borrowdale" is of a more laughable kind, and a fair specimen of the tales told about those good folks; of whom Mr. James Payn says, "they are the very simplest in the world, their language the broadest, and their notions the narrowest." Living in their dreary valleys, the Spring was a great joy to the simple dalesmen, and the voice of its harbinger a most welcome sound.

"'Tis the cuckoo!" In the hollow
Up the valley seemed to follow
Spring's fair footsteps that sweet throat.
All the fields put off their sadness;
Trees and hills and skies with gladness
Answering to the cuckoo's note.

It occurred to the natives that if they built a wall across the entrance to the valley they might keep the cuckoo within its bounds, and so ensure perpetual spring. But, sad to say, when June came and passed, with it passed away the "indefatigable" bird—

While in stupor and amazement,
Vacantly, from cope to basement,
Glowering at their wall, they stood.

The ingenious plan had failed; but "only because, according to popular belief, from generation to generation, the wall was not built one course higher." After this, we are not surprised to find that "the inhabitants of Borrowdale were a proverb, even among their unpolished neighbours, for ignorance." A similar story is also told of the foolish community known as "the wise men of Gotham." Many more or less improbable stories are told of their simplicity, such as mistaking a red-deer for a horned horse, and a mule for a peacock!

"The Tale of the Stirrups," says Mr. J. P. White, in his *Lays and Legends of the English Lake Country*, "is perhaps a little too absurd even for Borrowdale. A 'statesman' brought home from a distant fair or sale what had never before been seen in the dale—a pair of stirrups. Riding home in them, when he reached his own door his feet had become so fastened in them that they could not be got out; so, as there was no help for it, he patiently sat his horse in the pasture for a day or two, his family bringing him food. Then it was proposed to bring them both into the stable, which was done, his family bringing him food as before. At length it occurred to someone that he might be lifted with the saddle from his horse, and carried thereupon into the house. There the mounted man sat spinning wool in a corner of the kitchen till the return of one of his sons from St. Bees' School, whose learning, after due consideration of the case, suggested that the good man should draw his feet out of his shoes; when, to the joy of his family, he was restored to his occupation and to liberty."

Those who care to study the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland will find instruction and amusement combined in Mr. Richardson's *Cummerland Talk*, in Dr. Alexander Craig Gibson's *Laal Dinah Grayson*, etc., and in Mr.

Dickenson's *Cumbriana*. The following anecdote from a paper of Dr. Gibson's on the "Ethnology of the Lakes" will serve as a specimen of the dialect: — "I was walking up the pleasant little village of Branthwaite, and came upon an old-lady villager pottering over something or other in the gutter near her house. Wishing to propitiate her, I remarked that there had been a good deal of rain in the night, for the river was swollen. 'We co' it a beck,' said she very snappishly; and turning her back upon me, called out to her grand-daughter 'to bring oot t' scrapple.' And I, with some deference of tone, asked simply, 'What may a scrapple be?' when the girl came out with a small coal-rake, to which the old dame pointed, saying, 'Whe, that's what a scrapple may be!' And as I moved away rather sheepishly, I heard her call across the road to a neighbour: 'I doon't know whoar t' doctor's been browte up—he co's t' beck a river, an' doesn't know what a scrapple is.'"

What are the Limits of Clerical and Congregational Fellowship?

One who has had the great privilege of preaching for all the different Protestant denominations, and has felt the undertruth that feeds the roots of all of them, is inclined to ask the question, Has not the time arrived for a broader basis of union, at the commencement of each year in any case, so that instead of the very illogical union of the Evangelical Free Churches—the Ritualist, the Evangelical, and the Liberal—Conformist and Nonconformist—might at least once a year manifest unity of aim, even though they vary so widely in doctrine and forms of worship? The word "Evangelical" has been understood to mean the supposed attainableness of salvation only by one particular set of opinions, the Ritualists add and by one particular set of men, while the Liberals see that the Gospel comes in various dialects and voices to the children of men. History teaches us that there are distinctive types of Christianity that ought not to exclude each other, but find each other complemental. It seems as if a certain class of mind cannot approach God except through the Evangelical channel, another class of mind only through the Ritualistic channel, and yet another class of mind finds its approach to God through a simpler form of theology—one Gospel in three different dialects. Cannot a basis be found broad enough to unite the three in one at least once a year?

To get such a union, all must allow that theology has not reached its ultimate expression, or, which comes to the same thing, they must be prepared to admit that their own faith is one of the dialects, and nothing more. The great question is:—"When I have attained a faith consistent in its parts, agreeable to known fact, and adequate to my nature; on what terms is it to co-exist with other faiths presenting parallel pretensions? Am I to seek for unity by antipathy to all beliefs save one? or by inviting all of them to live their life and show their place in human history? Am I to expect them to come round to me, and altogether throw their own away? or to confess to myself my own limitations to suspect my blind sides, and reverently to seek something I have missed in that which others persist in seeing?" It is universally felt among reflecting men that in proportion to the growth of a cultivated reason the dogmatic standards of the past are inadequate as a basis for that sympatheic unity which arises, not from the world's coming round to any of the dogmatic standards of the past, but from a converging movement of thought towards a centre of repose as yet invisible. The world's centre of gravity is now more and more occupied by those minds that can both balance and sympathise with all the "vernacular idioms of the inner mind" without alarm for the eternal Gospel. Why do the so-called Evangelical Free Churches exclude the Free Christian Churches from fellowship with them? If they make such points as a certain theory of the Divine nature and of the person and work of Christ "essentials," I find to-day many of those in the so-called Evangelical Churches denying that theory. "The theory of propitiatory sacrifice no subtility can co-ordinate with our Lord's teaching." "The generally accepted form of the atonement belongs to a stage of ethical and religious culture that is passing away and will have no place in the purer and more spiritual religion of the future." "It is foreign to the whole matter of Christ's life and work to put into it anything that does not normally belong to the life of every man." "Christ, it is true,

is God *in* man; but in the same way, in however inferior degree, God is in all men—whether before or after Christ." Why call such men Evangelicals and unite with them, and refuse to unite with others who hold similar views, but who through sincerity have joined the Liberal Church? Is it not time we all admitted that people may find their Father through either the Evangelical, the Ritualistic, or the Liberal dialects of the one Gospel? No one of them is entitled to call itself the sacred language alone intelligible between man and God; hence we may not only justify the divisions of Christendom, but even cease to wish that they should disappear. For the moment one shrinks from "exclusive salvation," and no longer dares to plant his differing brother outside the Divine relations which embrace himself. The real barrier to spiritual fellowship is gone, and a union of all those who have moral sympathy with the spirit of Christ becomes possible. Then, instead of having the followers of Wesley, Newman, and Martineau, who are fed at separate tables and by voices often discordant, the Babel of the past would become the Pentecost of the future. Bishop Gore, Hugh Price Hughes, and Stopford Brooke—Ritualists, Evangelicals, and Liberals—would blend in harmony, and partake of the same bread of life and touch their lips with the same wine of remembrance, singing:

We differing sects who each declare,
Lo! here is Christ! or Christ is there!
Our claim at last we now can prove,
We have the genuine mark of love.

GEORGE V. CROOK.

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Together.

I walked by the side of my friend. The way was rough and long, but we did not heed it—we were together.

Then, one day, I missed him from my side, and all was dark to me.

High walls rose steeply on either side; I could not see the sky. But I went on my way. I should surely find him at my journey's end; and already I saw his arms stretched out to greet me, his glad smile. And then the high walls crumbled away, sunlight streamed on my path, and up in the blue sky—faint, but coming ever nearer—I heard a lark sing.

Then again I lost my beautiful vision, and the walls closed about me.

But I knew that the end would come.

And at last my journey was over. Out of the darkness I came with trembling joyful steps. From dark night I emerged into the light of day. From silence and gloom to the sound of children's voices—the sudden song of birds.

But where was he—my friend, for whose handclasp I had endured my long, long journey; whose outstretched arms and glad smile had drawn me through the darkness? He was not there to greet me.

And despair seized hold upon me. The light dazzled me. The bird's song stunned me. I could not hear the happy children's voices. And I turned to hide myself in the darkness again.

And as I turned he was there, at my side—close, close to me, his arm holding me, his eyes embracing me, his smile tremulous for joy of me.

And then I knew that he had never left me. Together we had come through the darkness—together emerged into the light. And I gazed into his eyes and said, "O that we might begin our journey over again"—and our journey was before us.

And side by side we started, and hand in hand.

And the way is long, but we do not heed it—we are together.

B. J.

Whateley says: "A mistaken dread of innovations causes us to overlook the errors and wrongs that are the greatest innovations."

News from the Field.

I cannot but drop a flower as I pass over the "Field" of our work into the graves of two of our saints who have entered into the Supreme Presence since our last issue. All Liverpool and Lancashire, as well as a wider circle throughout England and Wales, have united in bearing honourable testimony to the noble life and work of William Rathbone. People of all opinions and of many nations forgot creedal and racial differences when thinking of him. He stood for the Religion of Life, and represented only those verities which unite mankind into human brotherhood. His name will rank among the best of our cultured large-hearted laymen whose lives are enriched by benedictions upon all whom they could reach.

Not to so wide a circle was Mrs. Steinthal known, but wherever she was known she brought sweetness and light. Daughter and wife of honoured ministers in our Free Churches she kept up the highest traditions of culture and refinement which have marked the characters of the gracious women who have enriched our household of Faith with all that is uplifting and beautiful, and given a saintly tone to the homes and churches where she lived and worshipped. Her influence will not soon pass away.

It is a pity one cannot be in many places at once, or I would have been at Todmorden at the great gatherings of the Lancashire Sunday Schools, to share the festive hospitalities for which the Good Friday gatherings are noted, and to listen to the stimulating sermon, addresses and papers of the Teachers who were gathered together. I know I should have rejoiced over the record of good work done and gathered help towards that which has yet to be accomplished. Then I would have been at the kindred gathering of the Midlanders at Leicester. They also had a feast of fat things; found good cheer in seeing each other face to face, and were encouraged to go back to a larger work in a braver spirit. But if I wanted enthusiasm I would have been at the South Wales Unitarian Association at Capel-y-Groes, in Cardiganshire, and at the South-East Wales Unitarian Association at Cardiff. These Welshmen know how to kindle and keep up a fire. They have a passion for sermons and speeches, but they do not fail in work and in sacrifices.

It would also be pleasant to run across the Irish Channel now and then to see what is doing in the sister country. I know that, as a rule, things go on steadily there, except when some little breath of controversy is stirring, but there is no such breeze now, and quietude s the order of the day. There was, however, a pleasing ripple when on April 6th the Rev. J. C. Street, of Shrewsbury, re-opened the Old Meeting House at Ballyclare. This place of worship and its predecessor date back to 1645, and has had a congregation of farmers and other yeomanry all that time. The building was getting into serious dilapidation, but the Rev. W. Fielding and his energetic wife set to work, and they have practically re-built the place. It is now a pleasing structure, is well roofed, seated, and lighted, and has a good little organ. The costs incurred amount to about £500. The people and their friends by gifts, sale of work, collections, &c., have raised about £400. For the rest they look for aid to those who seem always ready to help a people who are helping themselves. The Rev. R. Lyttle preached on April 13th, and there is good reason to believe that these re-opening services were successful in enlisting the good-will of the country-side, and lightening somewhat the burden of debt.

Before leaving the sister isle it may be recorded that the congregation worshipping at "All Souls," Belfast, are grappling earnestly with their finances, and shewing a spirit which is sure to lead to very happy results. The stipend list has been largely augmented, and £400 have been wiped off the debt. But a great task still lies before the congregation.

I wish Mr. Conway and others, while defending their action about the Superannuation Fund—which was called into existence by the National Conference—would cease quibbling about the Conference. It has done splendid work for more than twenty years, and will do much better still if its friends and supporters are loyal to its aims and spirit. "Let well alone" is a good motto.

The meeting of the Guilds' Union—another outcome of the Conference—which took place in Birmingham, was very inspiriting. Through this agency the life of the young people in our churches will be greatly blessed. Mr. Wood, Mr. Ellis, and others are greatly to be congratulated.

I see, with pleasure, the opening of a new Congregational Hall at *Reading*, and was cheered to learn of the munificence of Mr. Walter Holland, who is bearing the cost of some fine new buildings connected with the Domestic Mission in *Liverpool*.

Mr. Hargrove, Mr. Armstrong, and other good men are keeping the cause of religion and progress alive in their districts by the regular publication and wide-spread circulation of vigorous sermons on behalf of truth, freedom, and righteousness, and are making their ministry felt for power and inspiration.

There are still vacant pulpits in the Midlands and elsewhere, and good work is stopped or hampered in consequence.

The controversy about the *Inquirer* and its editorship is going on, though none of the pages of our journals record what is said and felt. A strong feeling is being called forth by the impression, which is getting abroad, that restrictions upon the editor have been imposed which interfere with his independence. We have been accustomed to find the pages of the *Inquirer* open for the discussion of all questions which affect the religion, the life, and the well-being of the country, and there would be a great upheaval of indignation if it were to be made the mouthpiece of a party, instead of the reflection of the nation and its Free Churches.

SCRUTATOR.

Marcus Aurelius says: It is the duty of men to seek the good even of those who injure them."

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Johnny.

(Founded on an anecdote of the first French Revolution).

Johnny had a golden head
Like a golden mop in blow,
Right and left his curls would spread
In a glory and a glow,
And they framed his honest face
Like stray sunbeams out of place.

Long and thick, they half could hide
How threadbare his patch'd jacket hung;
They used to be his mother's pride;
She praised them with a tender tongue,
And strok'd them with a loving finger
That smoothed and stroked and loved to linger.

On a door-step Johnny sat,
Up and down the street looked he;
Johnny did not own a hat
Hot or cold though days might be;
Johnny did not own a boot
To cover up his muddy foot.

Johnny's face was pale and thin,
Pale with hunger and with crying;
For his mother lay within:
Talked and tossed and seemed a-dying,
While Johnny racked his brains to think
How to get her food and drink.

Get her physic, get her tea,
Get her bread and something nice;
Not a penny piece had he,
And scarce a shilling might suffice;
No wonder that his soul was sad,
When not one penny piece he had.

As he sat there thinking, moping,
Because his mother's wants were many,
Wishing much but scarcely hoping
To earn a shilling or a penny,
A friendly neighbour passed him by
And questioned him: why did he cry?

Alas! his trouble soon was told:
He did not cry for cold or hunger,
Maybe he was hungry both and cold;
He only felt more weak and younger,
Because he wished so to be old
And apt at earning pence or gold

Kindly that neighbour was, but poor,
Scant coin had he to give or lend;
And well he guessed there needed more
Than pence or shillings to befriend
That hapless woman in her strait
So much loved, yet so desolate.

One way he saw, and only one:
He would—he could not—give the advice,
And yet he must: the widow's son
Had curls of gold would fetch their price;
Long curls which might be clipped and sold
For silver, or perhaps for gold.

Our Johnny, when he understood
Which shop it was that purchased hair,
Ran off as briskly as he could
And in a trice stood cropped and bare,
Too short of hair to fill a locket,
But money jingling in his pocket.

Precious money—tea and bread,
Physic, ease, for mother dear,
Better than a golden head;
Yet our hero dropped one tear
When he spied himself close shorn,
Barer much than lamb new-born.

His mother throve upon the money,
Ate and revived and kissed her son;
But, oh! when she perceived her Johnny,
And understood what he had done,
All and only for her sake,
She sobbed as if her heart must break.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

The Wind.

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid;
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

R. L. STEVENSON.